



Peer Groups & the Secret Struggle of Leadership

Every leader has a secret struggle, even (and maybe especially) highly successful leaders. Underneath the outwardly projected success are a thousand balls they are juggling at any given moment – a handful of challenges on their team, at least one HR issue, and a host of decisions they need to make that do not yet have a direct or determined course of action.

Leaders need support in order to do their best work. Leaders also need development in their leadership skills if they are to take their teams to the next level and meet the many demands of running their nonprofit organization. Peer groups, sometimes also called “master mind” groups can provide the confidential spaces that leaders need where they can process ideas, think creatively, seek solutions, deepen their knowledge base, and build relationships with colleagues.

The OKCNP Leaders’ Circle is such a group and was designed to give leaders the direct support they needed in order to bring their most confident selves into their leadership positions. **JLA hosts a number of leadership peer groups including our Presidents’ Circle, CLI Cohort for leaders who will be soon assuming senior level leadership positions and our brand new Treasurers’ Circle.**

Peer groups are known to:

- Build organizational capacity by generating support through relationships.
- Provide facilitated conversations that advance goals and strategies.
- Build on adult learning principles that are useable, practical, and applicable.
- Gather group knowledge, wisdom, and learning from each other's' experiences.
- Facilitate action – ideas are put into action and tailored to address the diverse circumstances of the participants.

Peer groups are good for:

- People who are in similar roles but are geographically separated.

- Leaders whose work is related but separated by departments, organizations/institutions, or programs.
- People from separate organizations who would like to collaborate in a larger mission.

Peer groups provide:

- Relevance: the experience directly relates to participants' key responsibilities.
- Validation: knowing they are not alone.
- "Real life": Participants discover solutions to real life problems.
- Connection: strong bonds between peers inspires, motivates, and supports people in their leadership.

One of the things we most often hear from our Leaders' Circle participants is the discovery that they are "not alone" in their leadership challenges, or successes. Building relationships with colleagues they can depend on, for the long haul of leadership is one of the added benefits of the group. We all need people we can depend on to help us through the challenges of leadership. For the members of the Leaders' Circle, their "people" are the relationships they find in each other through the peer group experience.

Source: <https://www.oklahomacenterfornonprofits.org/blog-the-secret-struggle-of-leadership/>